



# Board to Promote Self-Sufficiency

6751 Columbia Gateway Drive, Suite 300 • Columbia, MD 21046

## Minutes of the September 22, 2015 Meeting

### Attendance

Appointed Members Present: Sherry Banks, Mike Couch, Brad Closs, Bitia Dayhoff, Joan Driessen, Andrea Ingram, Lisa Jablonover, Julie Keough, Jane O'Leary, Matt Poole. Absent: Stephen Martin, Richard Ohnmacht

Ex Officio Members Present: Karen Butler, Famebridge Witherspoon (for Tom Carbo), Jack Kavanagh, Patty Keeton, Diane Martin, Rachel Choo Quan (for Donna Wells), Fran Trout, Phyllis Madachy. Absent: Ronna Gotthainer.

Guests: Keisha Benjamin, Deputy Director of Bridges to Housing Stability, Inc.

Staff: Michelle Hippert

Meeting called to order at 9:06 a.m. by Mike Couch, Chairperson.

Mike Couch handed out the one page flyer on the BPSS with the County Code on the back for reference and newspaper article on proposed changes to Howard County's Fair Market Rent limits and the release of the Aging Master Plan.

### Presentation

Joan Driessen gave a presentation on the 2015 Self Sufficiency Indicators Report (Report) issued by the Association of Community Services. Highlights included:

- Increasing number of households accessing food pantries, and percentage of children receiving free and reduced school meals
- Increasing number of persons on Medicaid in the past five years
- Review of affordable housing units and defining affordability
- Review of number of households served in the Coordinated System of Homeless Services

Group suggestions and comments included:

- Add Employment and Transportation data in Report
- Increase of households receiving services is a good thing; indicates service delivery is effective
- Question raised if definitions for certain indicators have changed within the past five years
- Mike Couch proposed the Board choose some indicators for the greatest impact, and review the data in coming meetings

**Meeting minutes from the June 25, 2015 Board meeting were approved.**

### Updates

- **Fair Market Rents (FMRs) for Columbia City, MD. Mike Couch.**
  - The topic of the proposed changes to the Fair Market Rent (FMR) limits for Howard County included feedback from a representative of the Housing Department informing the Board that Housing staff and the County Council are discussing an official response to HUD. The proposed changes to the FMR would decrease the allowable limits for Housing Choice Vouchers by approximately 25 percent, and would restrict housing choices for residents' ability to stay in County. Matt Poole stated the rising need to develop affordable housing in Howard County and the proposed changes would further hinder those efforts. Michelle Hippert provided an explanation on behalf of all HUD funded projects that rely on the FMR to calculate grant awards. The proposal would decrease CoC awards and restrict geographic placement for homeless households

accessing a unit in Howard County. Other Board members requested more information before providing insight.

- **Continuum of Care. Michelle Hippert.**
  - The Emergency Solutions Grant application was submitted to the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) on September 1, 2015 for the Emergency Solutions Grant. The County's application included new local requests for Rapid Rehousing. The ERA ranked all applications submitted. The CoC Steering Group will be launching a Housing Stability workgroup to strengthen the final phase of the Coordinated System of Homeless Services. The Continuum of Care Collaborative Application FFY2015 was released on September 17<sup>th</sup>; all local Project Applications are due to DCS no later than October 20, 2015, 5 PM. The proposed FMR limits would decrease all HUD awards through the CoC Application. The Cold Weather Planning meeting was announced for September 23, 2015 with the Maryland Department of Human Resources. The CoC is planning a Retreat, to expand the eligibility of CSHS to include the "At-Risk" definition.
- **Non-Profit Center. Joan Driessen.**
  - The name has been updated to the Consolidated Human Services Center to reflect the participation of the Howard County Department of Social Services. Currently looking for properties between 85,000 to 100,000 square feet, near public transit with infrastructure to meet need. The County government is supportive of concept.
- **Strategic Plan. Mike Couch.**
  - Mike Couch reiterated the need to review the Strategic Plan on an ongoing basis. This includes a policy and advocacy role that may require the Board to take a position as topics are brought to the Board's attention.

## Discussion

- **Committees**
  - *Getting Ahead (GA) Committee.* Lisa Jablonover.
    - Three groups met, including two at the MultiService Center and one at Celebration Church for DSS. Positive Postcards are being released around the County. Three new groups are forming this fall including the Department of Corrections, Office of Workforce Development and Howard Community College. Issue arising is participants needing cars.
    - Quinton Askew at the MSC is now overseeing GA as the Department of Citizens Services' staff person. The Board is evaluating the process to transfer operational responsibility for the GA program to another organization.
    - Leadership Howard County (LHC) will be looking at *Staying Ahead*. Board can continue to develop the *Staying Ahead* program, the GA graduate program. LHC will research mentoring, connecting to mentoring, monthly mentoring, and drop-in sessions by topic.
    - Question posed on how the Board should operationalize its initiatives. A formal process should be established. Lisa Jablonover, Mike Couch and Phyllis Madachy should convene to establish a Request for Proposal to release the GA program into the community for an agency to fully operate the program.
  - *Community Outreach Committee.* No Update.
  - *Evaluation and Resource Allocation Committee.* No Update.
  - *Housing Committee.* Jane O'Leary.
    - Looking at reviewing a development model for households making under \$50,000 annually. Next meeting will discuss the Committee's focus.

- **Childcare Workgroup**

- Bita Dayhoff provided an update on the Early Childcare Action Group that is meeting external to the BPSS Committees/Workgroups. The group is almost finished with draft recommendations, including adding Early Head Start in Howard County, and employers providing subsidies.
- BPSS would like to provide input. Mike Couch requested to review meeting minutes and draft with the date of the next meeting. This is an opportunity for the County to take a position and support.
- Bita Dayhoff stated she will provide draft recommendations, meeting minutes and next meeting date to BPSS members for review.
- Phyllis Madachy stated that questions can be directed to the Office of Children's Services, as they are tasked to host this workgroup.

**New Business**

- **Transportation Workgroup. Jack Kavanagh.**

- Jack Kavanagh will lead the Workgroup, and will connect with the Community Outreach Committee to increase the number of Howard County cars that are donated to Vehicles for Change for use by Howard County residents.

- **Announcements.**

- Ex-offenders are looking for housing upon exit from Corrections. The Department of Corrections with the Department of Housing is looking to purchase a house for a transitional housing program for persons exiting detention.
- Phyllis Madachy announced the release of the Age-Friendly Community Plan for the next 20 years. The Plan lists service needs by priority, the role of the community, engagement, and providing client-driven services. There are five appendices to the Plan.
- The Loan Closet is now open 20 hours per week for persons needing medical supplies.

**Meeting adjourned** at 11:00 a.m.

**Next meeting:** October 22, 2015 at 9:00 a.m.

Minutes submitted by Michelle Hippert, CoC Manager. To request this publication in an alternate format, call 410-313-6400 (voice/relay).